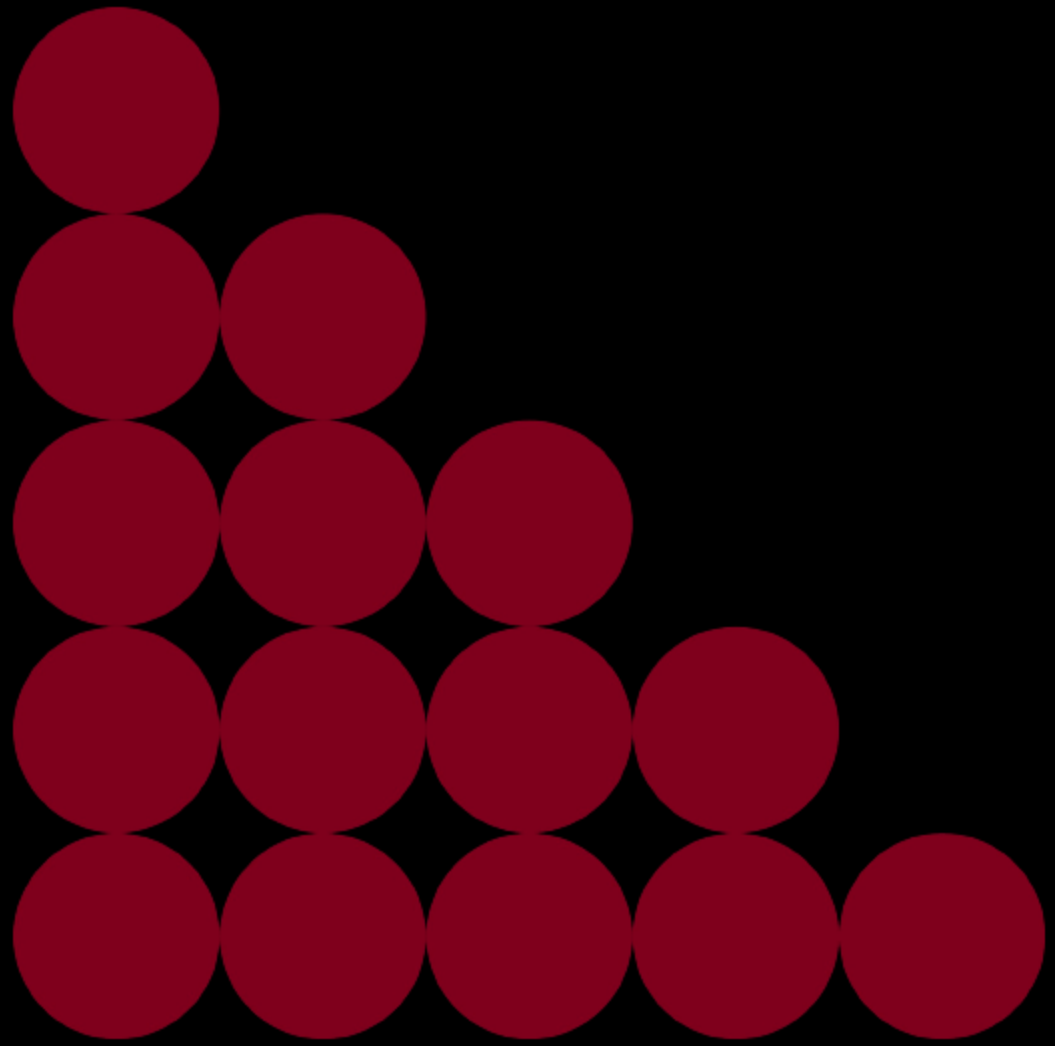
Engagement Institute
Home of Engagement Professionals

DATA CENTRES + SOCIAL LICENCE

Getting ahead of the curve



Marion Short, CEO
Engagement Institute

Social Licence Community of Practice
19 November 2026

The Engagement Institute

The peak body for community and stakeholder engagement in Australia and New Zealand

Our Vision

Meaningful engagement, shaping better futures

Almost 15,000 members

Professional learning and networks
Research, guidance and advocacy

Inclusion Influence Respect Impact Cohesion

Formerly IAP2 Australasia

Introducing our Position Paper

DATA CENTRES AND ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Energy, water, telecommunications and transport systems

Responsible development that delivers demonstrable public value

Meaningful engagement belongs within infrastructure governance

November 2026

Social licence grows through conduct

Ongoing confidence in decisions
that people see as fair, evidence-informed,
responsive and accountable

Who benefits?
Who carries the impacts and costs?
What can communities influence?

Trust depends on what happens over the life of the project

Community influence begins early

While choices remain open

Design and site selection wherever feasible

Clear scope of influence

Decision-makers, constraints and remaining options

Distinct First Nations engagement

Rights, Country, cultural safety and proper resourcing

Accessible participation throughout

Time to contribute, visible responses and ongoing relationships

Energy and shared infrastructure

Demand, capacity and costs

Expected electricity needs and network upgrades
Who pays, and potential implications for other consumers

Cumulative impacts

Energy, water, housing, workforce and services
Impacts across projects, places and time
Coordinated regional assessment and engagement

Our focus: transparency and accountability in infrastructure decisions

Our priorities for government and industry

A consistent national minimum

Requirements matched to impact, risk and community context

Readiness before accelerated assessment

Evidence of early influence, with participation rights preserved

Local benefit with clear accountability

Additional to mitigation and statutory obligations

Evidence that commitments lead to action

Public reporting, complaints pathways and proportionate assurance

Continuing the conversation

COMMUNITY INFLUENCE. PUBLIC VALUE.

For the Position Paper and discussion:
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What would communities need to see to have confidence in this development?

Discussion with Sabiene Heindl
CEO, The Energy Charter

ACCESS THE POSITION REPORT

Data Centres and
Enabling Infrastructure

engagementinstitute.org.au

Scan to access the Position Report

